

Nebraska Public Service Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PSC WARNS NATURAL GAS UTILITY CUSTOMERS OF POTENTIAL SCAMS

LINCOLN, JANUARY 6— The Nebraska Public Service Commission is raising awareness of potential phone and email scams targeting natural gas utility customers.

PSC Natural Gas Director Scott Coburn said, “Scammers are using several tactics in an effort to steal money or gain personal information from their victims. The Commission hopes by alerting consumers to the possibility of these scams we can help save time and money for all involved.”

Black Hills Energy recently made its customers aware of a scam involving a phone call alerting consumers to a “fake” company promotion < <http://bit.ly/2iPHWr7> >.

Another scam, is reported to utilize tactics that make it appear to Caller ID systems that the phone call is coming from their gas utility. The customer answering the call is told they have not paid for their natural gas service and are in jeopardy of being disconnected. The scammer immediately demands the customer make payment over the phone using a credit/debit/or cash card.

In some cases, fraudulent email messages are being sent to customers claiming their utility bill is ready. If the recipient clicks on the link to view the bill, it takes them to a compromised website infecting their computer with malware.

The PSC urges consumers to be aware of the practices their natural gas utility uses to contact its customers. Customers are also reminded to never allow anyone representing a utility into their home unless they have scheduled an appointment or are aware of a confirmed problem. If a consumer has concerns or doubts about whether a caller or visitor represents their local utility, they should contact the company’s customer service line, or access their account information online before proceeding with any transaction.

If you believe you have been contacted or have been the victim of a potential scam contact your local law enforcement and the Federal Trade Commission at 877- FTC-HELP (877-382-4357).

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